National Institute for
Learning Outcomes Assessment
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENTS

Natasha Jankowski

Associate Director, NILOA

Research Assistant Professor, UIUC

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

NILOA

NILOA's mission is to discover and disseminate effective use of assessment data to strengthen undergraduate education and support institutions in their assessment efforts.

● SURVEYS ● WEB SCANS ● CASE STUDIES ● FOCUS GROUPS ● OCCASIONAL PAPERS ● WEBSITE ● RESOURCES ● NEWSLETTER ● PRESENTATIONS ● TRANSPARENCY FRAMEWORK ● FEATURED WEBSITES ● ACCREDITATION RESOURCES ● ASSESSMENT EVENT CALENDAR ● ASSESSMENT NEWS ● MEASURING QUALITY INVENTORY ● POLICY ANALYSIS ● ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN ● DEGREE QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE ● TUNING

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

Welcome to NILOA

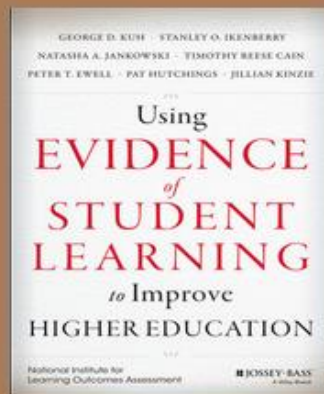Our August newsletter featuring NILOA updates, news, and upcoming conferences and programs is now available.

- « **Occasional Paper 24**
- « **New NILOA Report**
- « **NILOA Newsletter**
- « **NILOA Book**
- « **Occasional Paper 25**

GEORGE D. KUH · STANLEY O. IKENBERRY
NATASHA A. JANKOWSKI · TIMOTHY REESE CAIN
PETER T. EWELL · PAT HUTCHINGS · JILLIAN KINZIE

Using
EVIDENCE
of
STUDENT LEARNING
to Improve
HIGHER EDUCATION

National Institute for
Learning Outcomes Assessment

JOSSEY-BASS
A Wiley Brand

NILOA Calendar

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

FEATURED

National Institute for
Learning Outcomes Assessment

WEBSITE

University of North Carolina Wilmington

University of North Carolina Wilmington's assessment website is this month's Featured Website in the category of Centralized Assessment Repository.

Featured Website Archive

In the News | Archive

Join Our Email List

Keeping Up with Competency
Tue, Sep 29, 2015 - 08:00 am
Paul Fain in Inside Higher Education

Competency-based education continues to expand in practice and conversations. College officials even plan to get to together at a meeting called CBExchange to further discussions about the benefits and usefulness of competency-based education. This is a timely meeting given that the meaning of competency-based education is still evolving.

Produce Thinkers, Not Docile Workers
Tue, Sep 29, 2015 - 08:00 am
David Gooblar in Vitae

David Gooblar made a passionate case for faculty members to embrace student-centered learning rather than credential-centered learning, reflecting on the insights of professor Cathy Davidson from the Graduate Center at the University of New York.
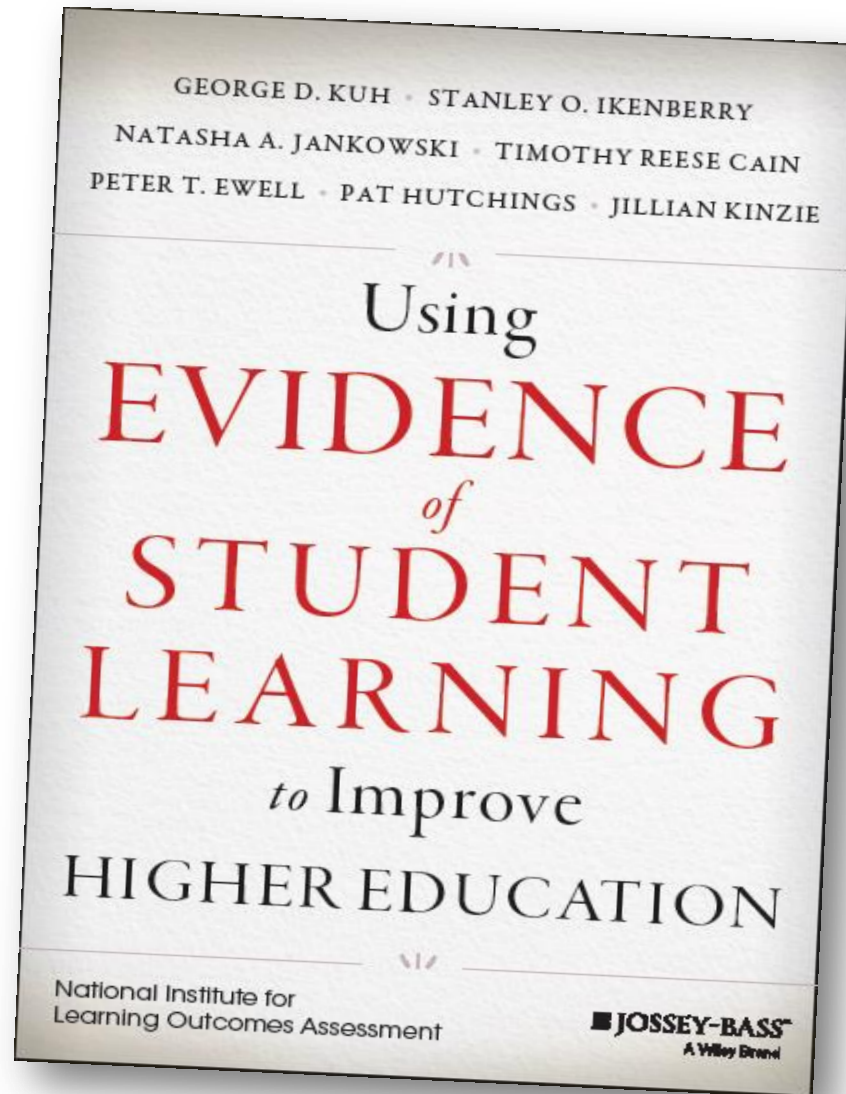
The New College Scorecard
Tue, Sep 29, 2015 - 08:00 am
Michael Stratford in Inside Higher Education

Have you seen the new college information website called the College Scorecard? Visitors to the website can see information about how much federal loans former students at college and universities have been able to pay back in addition to achievement data and students average incomes after graduation.

Using Evidence

GEORGE D. KUH · STANLEY O. IKENBERRY
NATASHA A. JANKOWSKI · TIMOTHY REESE CAIN
PETER T. EWELL · PAT HUTCHINGS · JILLIAN KINZIE

Using
EVIDENCE
of
STUDENT
LEARNING
to Improve
HIGHER EDUCATION

National Institute for
Learning Outcomes Assessment

JOSSEY-BASS
A Wiley Brand

Purpose

Why do we do assessment? What is the value and purpose of engaging in assessing student learning?

Value

- Institutions of higher education are increasingly asked to show the value of attending, i.e. impact in relation to cost; employment

- Public and policy makers want assurance of the quality of higher education

- Regional and specialized accreditors are asking institutions to show evidence of student learning and instances of use

WHAT DOES A A DEGREE REPRESENT?
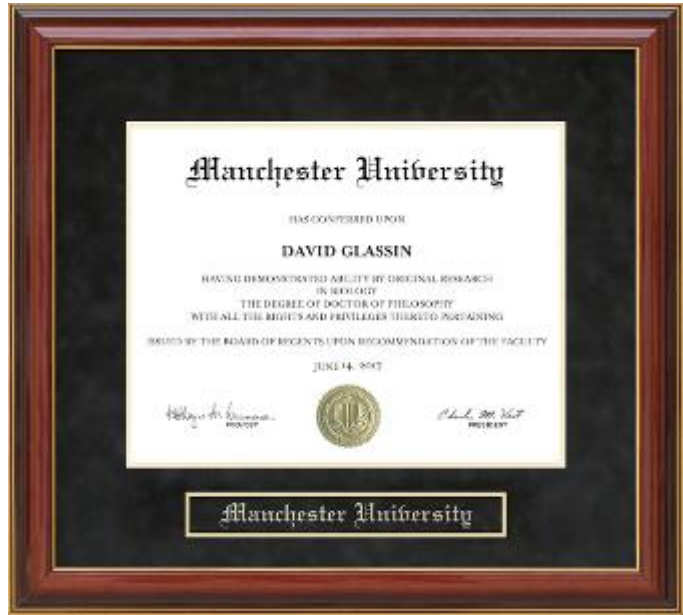
seat time?
Carnegie credit hours?
grade point averages?
required courses?
clinical hours?

All of these suggest what degrees represent in terms of numbers.

What do degrees represent in terms of learning?

But…

Do our assessments help answer these questions or prepare students for experiences in the "real world" or in the field of employment?

How can we offer various approaches to authentically assess student learning – not just in our course, but how our courses connect and add up to an integrated degree or credential?
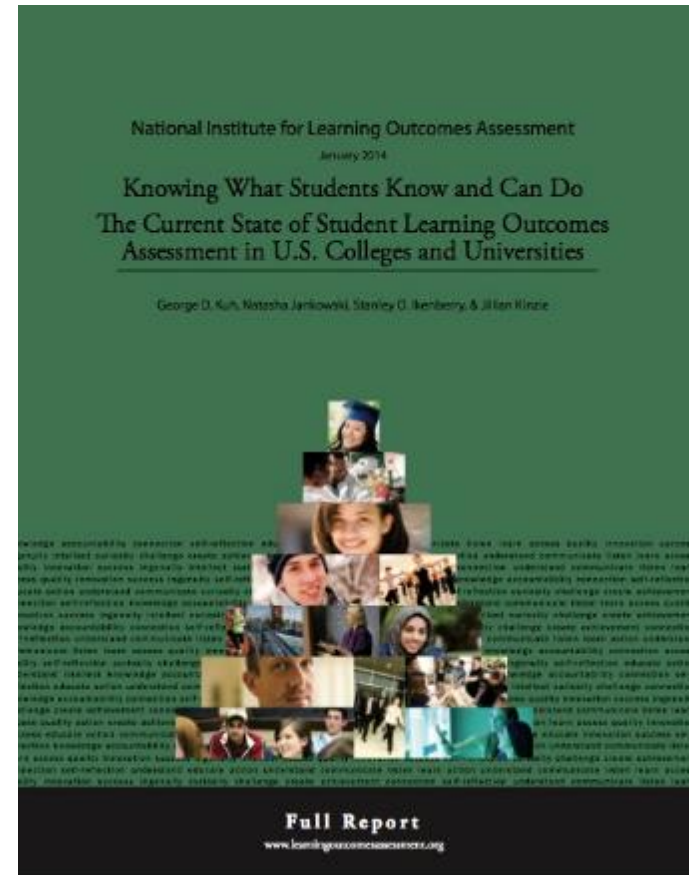
Course ➡ Program ➡ College ➡ General Education
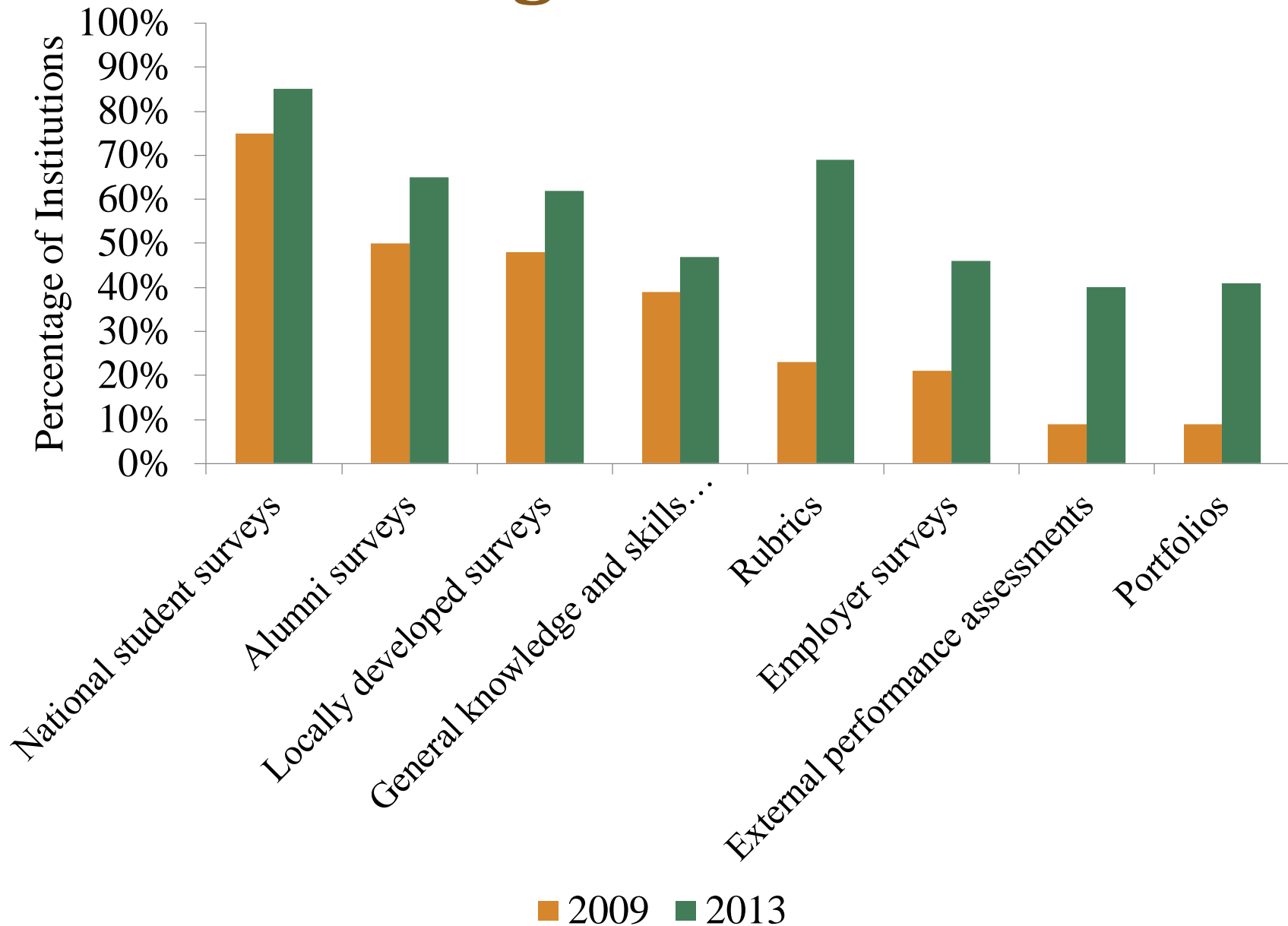
Why Focus on Assignments?

Most valuable assessment approaches:

- Classroom-based assessment

- National student surveys

- Rubrics

http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/knowingwhatstudentsknowandcando.html

Change Over Time

Faculty are working to create a curriculum that intentionally builds in integrated learning opportunities over time for students to apply and practice as well as transfer their knowledge and skills through assignments, in and out of courses.

But we have tensions…

Transparency

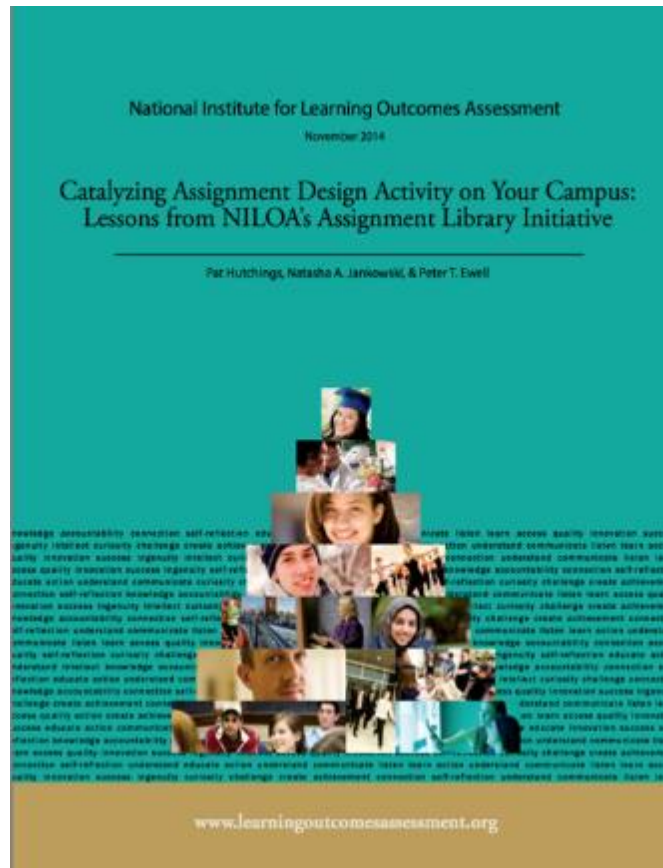Awareness of Learning Outcome Statements

Assignments

Are students aware that their assignments are linked to learning outcomes?

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
November 2014

Catalyzing Assignment Design Activity on Your Campus:
Lessons from NILOA's Assignment Library Initiative

Pat Hutchings, Natasha A. Jankowski, & Peter T. Ewell

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org

Rubrics

Do we share our rubrics or criteria with students and actively engage them in the review process?

Rubric Criteria	Student Evaluation	Faculty Feedback
Rubric Content	Stipulate why gave score did	Faculty stipulate why gave score did
	Stipulate what they need to do to advance	Targeted feedback to improve

Transference of Knowledge and Skills

We know that students have the hardest time with transferring knowledge - realizing something they learned before can be applied in another context.

We have to teach them to reflect.

 - Career services as an example

Alignment

Timing and Placement of Assignments

Do we consider student movement through curriculum in terms of the placement of signature assignments? Do we also consider transfer points and convergence between general education and the major?

Thoughts on Alignment

Fitness of Method or Approach

Part of alignment is fitness of method or approach – if asking students to *explain* something, multiple choice test might not be the best approach, but if asking students to *identify* – it might be very appropriate…

Verbs (and I don't mean Bloom's)

- Alignment and fitness of method occur in relation to the verbs identified in the learning outcome statement
- In your own assignment – what are you asking students to actually *do* or *demonstrate*?

Elicit

How an assignment is aligned is important but also how it elicits an example of student demonstration of the outcome in question is equally important.

- Scaffolding of outcome in a course or across courses
- Number of outcomes addressed in an assignment
- Assignment directions to students – is the outcome implicit or explicit?
- Preparation – how are we preparing students to complete the assignment?

Alignment

- How do you ensure alignment between our assignments and a given learning outcome for a learning experience?

- How do we create assignments and activities that will elicit student demonstration of a specific learning outcome?

- How do we know that we have mapped our assignment to rubric criteria?

Elements to consider in design

- Can't take on too many outcomes in one assignment- what are the outcomes? What are the verbs?

- Build and scaffold over time – how are you preparing students to complete the assignment? How does it ask students to integrate and apply learning?

- Complete the assignment yourself – what does a 'good' response look like?

- Have we solicited student feedback on assignment?

Possibilities

Ideas on assignment modification

- Shifting audience (in writing assignment)
- Modify genre (blog, pamphlet, drama, graphic novel, poster, oral presentation, debate)
- Practice throughout courses
- Planning and timing of feedback

The NILOA Initiative

- An **online library** of high-quality peer-endorsed assignments linked to DQP outcomes.

- Designed by faculty, part of the intellectual work they already do, course embedded.

- Building on campus efforts already underway

- Reflecting a conception of assessment as integral to teaching and learning vs "exoskeleton" (Ewell 2013).

National Institute for
Learning Outcomes Assessment
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

What we did (and will do again)

- Invited faculty applications (with draft assignment)

- Brought the group together for a day-long meeting

- Worked in 5-6 person, facilitated "charrettes"

- Can do on own campus or submit online

National Institute for
Learning Outcomes Assessment
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

- 76% of participants said "it helped me more clearly see my assignment through my students' eyes.

- 59%: I'm more aware of aligning my assignments with desired institutional outcomes.

- 38%: helped to lead or facilitate an event about assignment design on their campus

National Institute for
Learning Outcomes Assessment
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

Small Group Process

25-30 minute segments per person/assignment

➢Present assignment briefly—which outcomes, what course, which students, how does it work….

➢Discussion with group (focus on questions on feedback form)

➢Save 5 minutes for written feedback

➢Breath

➢Start again…

➢Debrief at end

National Institute for
Learning Outcomes Assessment
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

Assignment-Design Charrette Feedback Sheet:

Assignment_____

Comments From_____

1. What outcomes do you think students will be able to demonstrate with this assignment?

2. What are the main strengths of this assignment for assessing the identified outcomes?

3. Thinking about the assignment from the point of view of students, what questions or suggestions do you have?

4. Other suggestions and possibilities – especially in response to the author's questions about improving the assignment?

Assignment-Design Charrette Process:

In groups of 5, each person/team will have an opportunity to share their assignment and receive suggestions and feedback from the group. In order for everyone to have an opportunity to give and receive feedback, we will use a timed carousel process. There will be five rounds. You will be a "presenter" for one round and a "participant" for the other four rounds.

Each round is 25 minutes.

Introduce assignment (5 min):
Presenters will introduce the assignment and provide background information such as: in what course the assignment is used, at what point in the course, pertinent information about the students in the course (majors vs. non-majors), what they find most challenging about the assignment, how it builds on earlier work and/or prepares students for more advanced work in later courses (or success beyond graduation), your experience with the assignment to date, how you hope to strengthen it, and what kinds of feedback and suggestions you would like from others.
Listeners: jot down thoughts and questions but please do not interrupt the presenter, let them have their full five minutes.

Discussion (15 min):
Listeners will respond to what they have heard, taking turns asking questions, sharing thoughts, feedback, etc. The purpose of the discussion is to help your colleague strengthen their assignment so please be constructive and collegial. Also, please mind the time and allow each participant the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Discussion should address the four questions on the feedback sheet.
Presenters: listen carefully and respond to the inquiries. Think about alignment, but also think creatively about possible solutions.

Feedback (5 min):
Everyone: Based on the discussion, use the feedback form to give the presenter written feedback and suggestions. The presenter can use this time to write down notes about the assignment, based on what they just heard, along with outlining next steps for revision or additional feedback.

Assignment Library Tour

www.assignmentlibrary.org
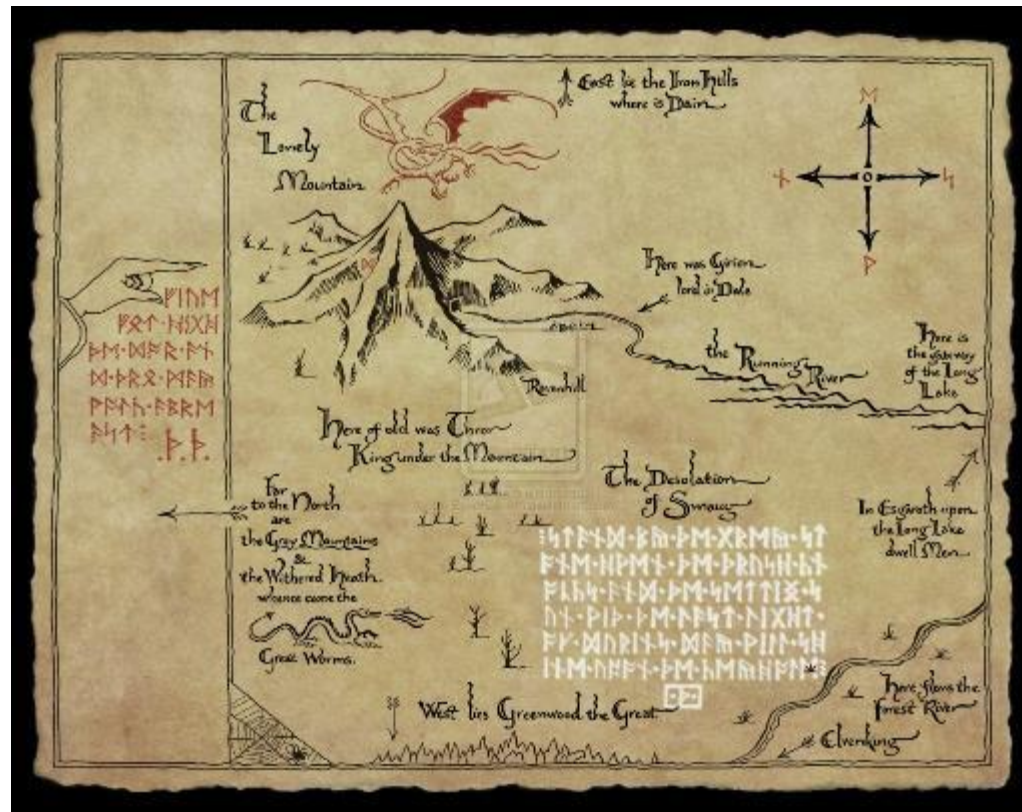
http://degreeprofile.org/featured-assignments/

Action Steps

- What from these conversations is usable in your local context?

- How can you get assignment conversations occurring on your campus?

Curriculum Mapping and Assignments

Curriculum Mapping: The Process

- Focused on curriculum and program learning outcomes
- Two-dimensional matrix representing courses on one axis and outcomes on the other
- Faculty identify which courses address which learning outcomes

- Is it an individual process or one of consensus building?
- If two faculty members individually mapped the curriculum would they end up with the same map?

Examples

Metro State College of Denver
Curriculum Mapping Template
2008-09

> **Each required course should be linked with at least one Learning Objective and one level***
> **by entering the appropriate letter(s) in the relevant cell. Programs are free to include other**
> **courses as appropriate.**

	Learning Objective 1	Learning Objective 2	Learning Objective 3	Learning Objective 4
XXX1234				
XXX2345				
XXX3456				
XXX4567				
XXX5678				
XXX6789				
XXX7890				

<u>Levels</u> - These are stated from the student's perspective and tied to Bloom's Taxonomy as much as possible.
V = discover (gain knowledge, comprehend information)
P = practice (apply knowledge gained to real situations, analyze issues and questions)
D = demonstrate (prepare a work product - exam, paper, presentation, etc. - that represents knowledge gained, application of sar
                          and synthesis or evaluation of knowledge and ideas)

* a course might be identified as offering students the opportunity to do more than one level

	Introductory Course	Research Methods	Advanced Content Course A	Laboratory / Practicum Course	Advanced Content Course B	Advanced Content Course C	Advanced Content Course D	Capstone Course
Content								
SLO 1: Disciplinary knowledge base (models and theories)	Introduced		Reinforced		Reinforced	Reinforced	Reinforced	Mastery / Assessed
SLO 2: Disciplinary methods		Introduced		Reinforced		Reinforced		Mastery / Assessed
SLO 3: Disciplinary applications	Introduced		Reinforced		Reinforced		Reinforced	Mastery / Assessed
Critical Thinking								
SLO 4: Analysis and use of evidence		Introduced		Reinforced	Reinforced		Reinforced	Mastery / Assessed
SLO 5: Evaluation, selection, and use of sources of information	Introduced	Reinforced		Reinforced		Reinforced		Mastery / Assessed
Communication								
SLO 6: Written communication skills	Introduced	Reinforced		Reinforced		Reinforced		Mastery / Assessed
SLO 7: Oral communication skills		Introduced	Reinforced		Reinforced	Mastery / Assessed		
Integrity / Values								
SLO 8: Disciplinary ethical standards		Introduced		Reinforced	Reinforced			Mastery / Assessed
SLO 9: Academic integrity	Introduced	Reinforced	Reinforced	Reinforced		Reinforced		Mastery / Assessed
Project Management								
SLO 10: Interpersonal and team skills			Introduced		Reinforced		Reinforced	Mastery / Assessed
SLO 11: Self-regulation and metacognitive skills	Introduced			Reinforced	Reinforced	Reinforced		Mastery / Assessed

Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
http://uwf.edu/cutla/

Sample Curriculum Map (Level of Skill)

Implications

- While seemingly a very straightforward process – identify learning outcomes and where addressed – there are many assumptions behind this potentially "simplistic task"

- Do our assumptions about alignment actually hold between the levels?

- If mapped to broad outcomes, is consistency an issue or agreement on what the outcomes mean?

- What is standard of alignment – is one paper in one class enough within a program to say the outcome is addressed and met? How much is enough? What does it mean to introduce, reinforce, or master?

Why do curriculum mapping?

- What are we hoping to achieve through mapping the curriculum?
  - Alignment (within a program, between general education and institutional goals, etc.)
  - Identifying where and how particular outcomes are expected, explicitly taught for, and assessed (Ewell, 2013)
  - Backwards design the curriculum
  - Understand the nature and role of course pre-requisites

  - **Mapping as a lens – it is a way of seeing organizational structure**

What else can be mapped?

- Spatial elements: GIS Communication

- Content

- Structure

- Course-taking patterns

- Assignment timing

- Co-curriculum

- **Where does learning happen? Does a curriculum map inherently assume academic affairs at the expense of student affairs or other institutional elements?**

	Introductory Course	Research Methods	Advanced Content Course A	Laboratory / Practicum Course	Advanced Content Course B	Advanced Content Course C	Advanced Content Course D	Capstone Course
Content								
SLO 1: Disciplinary knowledge base (models and theories)	Exam Questions		Exam Questions		Exam Questions	Exam Questions	Exam Questions	Capstone Portfolio
SLO 2: Disciplinary methods		Exam Questions		Exam Questions		Exam Questions		Capstone Portfolio
SLO 3: Disciplinary applications	Exam Questions		Exam Questions		Class Project		Term Paper	Capstone Portfolio
Critical Thinking								
SLO 4: Analysis and use of evidence		Term Paper		Lab Paper	Class Presentation		Term Paper	Capstone Portfolio
SLO 5: Evaluation, selection, and use of sources of information	Annotated Bibliography	Term Paper		Lab Paper		Term Paper		Capstone Portfolio
Communication								
SLO 6: Written communication skills	Reflection Essays			Lab Paper		Term Paper	Term Paper	Capstone Portfolio
SLO 7: Oral communication skills			Class Presentation	Poster Session	Class Presentation	Class Presentation		
Integrity / Values								
SLO 8: Disciplinary ethical standards		Reflective Paper		IRB/ACUC Proposal	Reflective Paper			Capstone Portfolio
SLO 9: Academic integrity	Class Assignments & Exams	Exams & Term Paper	Class Exams	Class Assignments & Exams	Class Assignments & Exams	Exams & Term Paper	Exams & Term Paper	Capstone Portfolio
Project Management								
SLO 10: Interpersonal and team skills			Peer Review of Team Skills		Project Client Feedback		Peer Review of Team Skills	Capstone Portfolio
SLO 11: Self-regulation and metacognitive skills	Class Assignments & Exams			Class Assignments & Exams	Class Assignments & Exams	Exams & Term Paper		Capstone Portfolio

Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment   **Sample Curriculum Map (Assignments & Embedded Assessments)**
http://uwf.edu/cutla/

Thank you!

Email: njankow2@illinois.edu

www.degreeprofile.org

www.assignmentlibrary.org

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org